

Appl. No. 10/016,411  
Amdt. Dated August 4, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of May 4, 2004

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (previously presented): A disposable undergarment having longitudinally opposite end regions and transversely opposite side regions and comprising:

a liquid-impervious base sheet defining a non-skin-facing side;

a liquid-absorbent panel placed upon said base sheet;

a liquid-pervious topsheet placed upon said liquid-absorbent panel and defining a skin-facing side opposed to said non-skin-facing side; and

an elastically stretchable and substantially liquid-impervious skin-facing sheet attached to said skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious topsheet so as to cover said liquid-absorbent panel,

said skin-facing sheet having:

fixed regions lying on said longitudinally opposite end regions and joined to said skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious topsheet;

a longitudinally middle region extending between said fixed regions and normally biased to be spaced apart upward from said liquid-absorbent panel as said undergarment is curved in a longitudinal direction thereof with the skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious topsheet inside;

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a pair of transversely opposite side regions curving transversely inward on both sides of said longitudinally middle region so as to define a pair of leg-holes; and

at least one opening formed in said longitudinally middle region,

longitudinally opposite end regions of said liquid-pervious topsheet and said skin-facing sheet being substantially coextensive in a transverse direction,

a longitudinal central portion of the skin-facing sheet having a width that is smaller than a width of an underlying central portion of the liquid-pervious topsheet so that transverse opposite outer terminal side edges of the liquid-pervious topsheet and of said skin-facing sheet at the longitudinal central portion are not coextensive with one another in the transverse direction and the transverse opposite outer terminal side edges of the skin-facing sheet at the longitudinal central portion are spaced apart upward and inward from the transverse opposite outer terminal side edges of the liquid-pervious topsheet at the longitudinal central portion as said undergarment is curved in a longitudinal direction thereof with the skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious sheet inside,

a basis weight of said skin-facing sheet being higher in said transversely opposite side regions defining the leg-holes than a basis weight of a remaining region of said skin-facing sheet and a tensile stress of said skin-facing sheet is higher than a tensile stress of said transversely opposite side regions defining the leg-holes than in the remaining region.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The disposable undergarment according to Claim 1, wherein a basis weight of said skin-facing sheet is higher in a peripheral edge region of said at least one opening than

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a basis weight of the remaining region and a tensile stress of said skin-facing sheet is higher in said peripheral edge region of said at least one opening than a tensile stress of the remaining region.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The disposable undergarment according to Claim 1, wherein a bulging line extends on said skin-facing sheet in said longitudinal direction in a vicinity of a longitudinal center line of said skin-facing sheet and wherein said bulging line is formed by folding and overlapping a part of said skin-facing sheet and joining said part together.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The disposable undergarment according to Claim 3, wherein said skin-facing sheet is folded back at least once along said transversely opposite side regions defining the leg-holes and said peripheral edge region of said at least one opening so as to increase the basis weight and the tensile stress of said skin-facing sheet in said transversely opposite side regions and in said peripheral edge region of said at least one opening.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The disposable undergarment according to Claim 1, further including a pair of substantially liquid-impervious leak-barrier sheets extending in the longitudinal direction along said transversely opposite side regions of said undergarment and disposed between said base sheet and said skin-facing sheet, each of said leak-barrier sheets having longitudinally opposite fixed end regions joined to said longitudinally opposite end regions of said undergarment, a fixed bottom region joined to each of said transversely opposite side regions of said undergarment

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and a fixed top region joined to the surface of said skin-facing sheet opposite to each of the leak-barrier sheets.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The A disposable undergarment having longitudinally opposite end regions and transversely opposite side regions and comprising: according to Claim 5,

a liquid-impervious base sheet defining a non-skin-facing side;

a liquid-absorbent panel placed upon said base sheet;

a liquid-pervious topsheet placed upon said liquid-absorbent panel and defining a skin-facing side opposed to said non-skin-facing side; and

an elastically stretchable and substantially liquid-impervious skin-facing sheet attached to said skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious topsheet so as to cover said liquid-absorbent panel,

said skin-facing sheet having:

fixed regions lying on said longitudinally opposite end regions and joined to said skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious topsheet;

a longitudinally middle region extending between said fixed regions and normally biased to be spaced apart upward from said liquid-absorbent panel as said undergarment is curved in a longitudinal direction thereof with the skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious topsheet inside;

a pair of transversely opposite side regions curving transversely inward on both sides of said longitudinally middle region so as to define a pair of leg-holes; and

at least one opening formed in said longitudinally middle region.

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longitudinally opposite end regions of said liquid-pervious topsheet and said skin-facing sheet being substantially coextensive in a transverse direction.

a longitudinal central portion of the skin-facing sheet having a width that is smaller than a width of an underlying central portion of the liquid-pervious topsheet so that transverse opposite outer terminal side edges of the liquid-pervious topsheet and of said skin-facing sheet at the longitudinal central portion are not coextensive with one another in the transverse direction and the transverse opposite outer terminal side edges of the skin-facing sheet at the longitudinal central portion are spaced apart upward and inward from the transverse opposite outer terminal side edges of the liquid-pervious topsheet at the longitudinal central portion as said undergarment is curved in a longitudinal direction thereof with the skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious sheet inside.

a basis weight of said skin-facing sheet being higher in said transversely opposite side regions defining the leg-holes than a basis weight of a remaining region of said skin-facing sheet and a tensile stress of said skin-facing sheet is higher than a tensile stress of said transversely opposite side regions defining the leg-holes than in the remaining region, wherein said leak-barrier sheets are elastically stretchable and wherein said skin-facing sheet and said leak-barrier sheets are attached under tension in said longitudinal direction to said skin-facing side of said liquid-pervious topsheet.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The disposable undergarment according to Claim 1, wherein said transversely opposite side regions of said skin-facing sheet defining the leg-holes lie inwardly of said transversely opposite side regions of said base sheet.